



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts: Mayor Knox White, 864-467-4590
Tom Sowden, 864-277-0732
Candace Sommer 864-467-4470 sommerc@greatergreenville.com

CITY OF GREENVILLE AND TIANJIN FREE TRADE ZONE FORMALIZE RELATIONSHIP AT SIGNING CEREMONY

February 10, 2003 --(Greenville, SC)—Greenville Mayor Knox White and Mr. Feng Zhi-Jiang, Standing Vice President of the Tianjin Free Trade Zone, People's Republic of China, signed a Sister Cities agreement today in a formal ceremony in Council Chambers, Greenville City Hall. Officials participating in the ceremony were representatives of Greenville Sister Cities International, Greenville City Council and the 7-member delegation from Tianjin Free Trade Zone.

Approximately one hundred invited guests and interested community members attended the 30-minute ceremony. Community leaders in the fields of education, the arts, and commerce and Greenville Sister Cities members and board were among those seated in Council Chambers.

Members of the Chinese delegation included representatives of the Tianjin government, Tsinlien Group, a Tianjin government-owned business enterprise, and the Tianjin Education Authority. The delegation will be in South Carolina for 10 days and will visit Columbia and Charleston during their stay.

The formal signing ceremony marks the successful results of the efforts begun by local business leaders Vivian Wong and Peter Kwan to establish a commercial/cultural relationship between Greenville and Tianjin Free Trade Zone. Prior to the Chinese delegation's visit to Greenville, Ms. Wong and Dr. Kwan initiated a trip to Tianjin for members of the Greenville community. Mayor White was a member of the delegation. The Mayor said the trip was useful in identifying possibilities for business, educational and cultural exchanges between the two cities and noted the importance of exploring the options for international cooperation. "Our city is at the center of an area with the highest per capita international investment in the nation. Establishing a formal relationship with Tianjin broadens our capabilities for international standing."

Tianjin Free Trade Zone is Greenville's third Sister Cities relationship, along with Bergamo, Italy and Kortrijk, Belgium. Greenville Sister Cities President Tom Sowden says that the Tianjin connection adds a new dimension to the Greenville Sister Cities program. "It's exciting to establish a relationship with a city half-way around the world. There is so much to learn about the Chinese culture and we anticipate building an active and enriching exchange program between our two cities."

Greenville Sister Cities is a member of Sister Cities International, a non-profit citizen diplomacy network creating and strengthening partnerships between U.S. and international communities in an effort to increase global cooperation at the municipal level, to promote cultural understanding and to stimulate economic development. SCI leads the movement for local community development and volunteer action by motivating and empowering local citizens, municipal officials and business leaders to conduct long-term programs of mutual benefit.

end